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AUTHOR Porter, Paige
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ABSTRACT

Multiple data sources are used in this study of educational change in the United States and Australia. The author considers political issues that may affect the implementation of educational reform efforts at the federal level, such as homogeneity versus heterogeneity, centralization versus decentralization, constitutional responsibility for education, egalitarianism, types of political structures, and modes of federal governmental influence on schools. He also discusses organizational issues that may affect the implementation of educational innovations at the school level. The paper concludes that policy makers who are concerned that their programs are implemented at the school level must be aware both of federal political factors and of significant, local organizational factors. (Author/WD)

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IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES IN FEDERAL REFORM EFFORTS IN EDUCATION : THE UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIA

Paper presented at the American Educational
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DR. PAIGE PORTER
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
MURDOCH UNIVERSITY
PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIA 6150

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ABSTRACT

Implementation Issues in Federal Reform Efforts in Education
The United States and Australia

Dr. Paige Porter
Murdoch University

This study compares federal efforts to reform education in the United States and Australia. The focus is on political issues that may affect implementation at the federal level and organizational issues which may affect implementation at the school level. Multiple data sources are used. Conclusions suggest that federal policy-makers need to be cognizant of relevant political factors to ensure programs supporting educational change reach schools, but they also need to aware of significant organizational factors at the school level to facilitate actual implementation within schools.

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INTRODUCTION

The United States and Australia have much in common. They are both relatively young English-speaking pioneer countries settled primarily by European immigrants. They both have democratic representative governments cast in the federal mold. They both have mixed capitalist and socialist economies and they are both affluent industrialized societies. They are even nearly identical in shape and size both encompassing about three million square miles in total. Yet these similarities are somewhat misleading. Beneath the obvious exteriors are some deep seated cultural differences which will be further explored in this paper. It is, in fact, this interesting combination of similar and dissimilar features that makes a comparative study of education between America and Australia particularly useful. On the one hand the two countries are similar enough for the cultural and political contexts to be "understood" and on the other hand they are different enough to provide genuine contrasts in the nature of the provision of public education.

An examination of educational change in the two countries is particularly enlightening. In attempting this considerable task I have used two perspectives in my own work: a political perspective and an organizational perspective. Within each perspective I have focused primarily on the implementation stage of the change process rather than on either the initiation or incorporation stages. I have also concentrated my attention within the political perspective on the federal level and within the organizational perspective on the school level. Thus I have defined the framework for investigation as political issues which may affect the implementation of educational reform efforts at the federal level, and

organizational issues which may affect the implementation of educational innovations at the school level. See Figure 1.

Figure 1

Framework for Analysis of Federal Educational Reform Efforts

STAGES OF CHANGE PROCESS	LEVEL & TYPE OF ANALYSIS:			
	FEDERAL LEVEL		SCHOOL LEVEL	
	Political	Organizational	Political	Organizational
1. INITIATION				
2. IMPLEMENTATION	X			X
3. INCORPORATION				

Note: Cells with X refer to the focus of this study.

Using the framework laid out in Figure 1, it is obvious that there is much that will be neglected in this study. However, there are good reasons for focusing on the federal level given the substantial movement of this branch of government into education in both countries in the post World War II period. The state level of government will not be totally overlooked as, in fact, state policy will be discussed insofar as it interacts with either federal policy or school level implementation. My focus on the implementation stage of the change process reflects the relative neglect of this area when compared with the initiation stage. (I am actually examining the incorporation stage in another study which does not have a comparative elemen .) I have also concentrated on political rather than organizational issues at the federal level primarily because this is where the comparison between countries becomes particularly relevant as political structures and processes contrast. And I have concentrated on organizational issues at the school level simply because schools are "where the action is" and

organizational factors (as opposed to psychological factors for example) are likely to be those with the greatest possibilities for change.

POLITICAL ISSUES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FEDERAL REFORM EFFORTS IN EDUCATION

Introductory Contrasts : Homogeneity vs Hetereogeneity and Centralization vs Decentralization

In looking at federal government efforts to support educational change in the United States and in Australia let me make a few background comments that are obviously gross generalizations but are relevant to keep in mind when comparing the two countries. Two of the areas of the greatest difference between America and Australia are their positions on two continuums: one a continuum of homogeneity/hetereogeneity, and another a continuum of centralization/decentralization.

The United States is a remarkably more hetereogeneous country than Australia, whether one is looking at the climate and the terrain or the ethnic, racial and religious background of its citizens. Australia simply does not have the extremes of climate and geography that the United States has. Nor has it been, until the post World War II period, the recipient of migrants of many different nationalities. Its population base has traditionally been solidly British although this is changing dramatically now. The United States is also a considerably more decentralized country in terms of population spread and political and economic power. One small fact that it is particularly useful to remember is that in countries of nearly identical size the United States has a population of over 200,000,000 while Australia has only just climbed over the 14,000,000 mark. Furthermore, Australians are primarily an urban people with only two cities, Sydney and Melbourne containing nearly 40 percent of the population. In fact, only 35.5 percent

of Australia's population lives in rural areas or centers of less than 100,000 people while nearly 72.3 percent of America's population lives in such areas. These contrasts in homogeneity and hetereogeneity and centralization and decentralization are important features and clearly significant to the kinds of education systems which have developed within each country as well as the problems faced at various stages by those systems.

Constitutional Responsibility for Education

In both the United States and Australia, the constitutional responsibility for education lies with the states by virtue of the fact that neither federal constitution mentions education and it is consequently a power reserved to the state governments. The difference is that in America the state governments delegated both the raising of education funds and the operation of the schools, to local school districts, while in Australia such responsibilities have remained with the state governments. This is hardly surprising when we consider that in 1789, at the time of American federation, it was not considered appropriate for any government to get involved in education, whereas by 1901 and Australian federation the previous colonial governments had already established systems of education that were - more or less - "free, compulsory and secular." Thus the American educational system grew organically as people spilled across the land and wanted their own schools, while the Australian education system developed more systematically along with other services provided by the centralized colonial governments in each colony.

Egalitarianism : Individualism vs Collectivism

Related to these different patterns of the development of formal schooling are different interpretations of the meaning of equality and hence equality of educational opportunity in the two democratic nations both of which pride themselves on the virtues of their particular brand of a "free society." In general the differences can be described as a contrast in the emphasis placed on individualism *versus* collectivism with America stubbornly individualistic and Australia more collectivist. While both countries have egalitarian value systems, this different emphasis has allowed Australians to marry equality of educational opportunity with strong centralized bureaucracies. Thus the huge state education departments have consolidated and grown to a large extent in the interests of providing equality of educational services across vast sparsely populated areas. Until recently Americans have been more concerned to emphasize the value of the democratic process in education by keeping their schools under local and hence diverse control rather than stressing equality of the educational product. The monopoly on Australian education held by the large state departments has significant implications for federal government efforts to introduce innovations in the "department's schools."

Also connected with these different interpretations of egalitarianism are different expectations of education. Education has been a religion to the idealistic American precisely because it is the vehicle through which individualism can operate. Asserting individualism means "getting ahead" and that means of one's neighbors. The more pragmatic Australian certainly believes in everyone "getting their fair share" and in being able to "have a go" but getting ahead of one's neighbor is another matter. One's neighbors are one's mates and group solidarity is more the norm. In any event it is typically believed that most people need only what Partridge (1968) once called "the basic wage of education."

The Increasing Role of the Federal Governments in Education

With these background observations in mind it is interesting to trace the increasing role of the federal governments in education in Australia and America. In both countries the pattern of growth progressed very slowly over the twentieth century and can be characterized as incremental and *ad hoc* in nature punctuated with bursts of activity related to societal crises. Hence in both Australia and the United States there was a flurry of social legislation that related to youth and education during the Depression and the Second World War. But it was the "crisis" of the Soviet Sputnik that moved the respective federal governments into significant federal aid for the first time, in America with the National Defense Education Act of 1958 and in Australia, following leads from overseas, with the Science Laboratories Scheme of 1964.

By 1965 the United States Congress had passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a massive bill encompassing five sections, called Titles, which were to provide funds for the education of disadvantaged children, funds for educational materials, funds for supplementary educational centers and model programs, funds for research and development, and grants to state education departments in order to strengthen them. Australia did not move to provide large scale aid until the election of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972, the subsequent appointment of the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission chaired by Professor Peter Karmel, and finally the establishment of the Schools Commission in 1974 to implement the recommendations of that report and to continue to advise the government on the needs of schools. The programs introduced at that time were the General Recurrent Grants, the General Buildings Grants, the Libraries Grants, the Disadvantaged Schools Program, the Special Projects (Innovations) Program, the Special Education Grants and the Teacher Development Program.

In considering the implementation of these kinds of federal programs from a policy perspective it is useful to begin with the observation that, in general, the people concerned with creating the policy and enacting the relevant legislation seldom look down the track to the implementation stage. Politicians and pressure groups are concerned to achieve the policy which they want and which they can get and this process in itself frequently involves some fairly creative manoeuvers. However, the divorce of implementation from policy typically results in difficult, poor or even non-implementation primarily because, as Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) have pointed out, the events and their consequences occur in different organizations. Thus the basic framework for either political or bureaucratic learning is not present.

It should also be apparent that implementation of social programs in federal systems - when compared with unitary political systems - is particularly problematic precisely because there are so many levels of government and layers of bureaucracy. At the most simple level this means that the opportunities for confusion about goals, the intentional and unintentional redirecting of priorities, and the accumulation of the effects of the idiosyncrasies of different units of government and different individuals is vast. At a more complex level it raises questions about just who the client is - the state and local authorities or the individuals and groups whose problems typically figured so prominently in the rhetoric of the legislation passage of the legislation.

Modes of Federal Government Influence on Schools

In highlighting some of the political issues that may emerge during implementation I should point out that national governments in federal systems have several options open to them if they wish to support or

sponsor change in education at the school level. These have been well summarized by Michael Kirst (1976) for the American scene and they apply to Australia as well. The modes through which influence can be attempted include:

1. The provision of general aid - This refers to financial aid with either no specification whatsoever as to the use of the funds or financial aid that is given in the two major categories of capital and recurrent expenditures i.e. school building construction and teacher's salaries. In both the United States and Australia general revenue sharing schemes reflect the first type of "general aid" insofar as state governments make the decisions regarding how the funds for education are to be spent. In Australia the activities of the Commonwealth Grants Commission are also relevant. The Australian Schools Commission's General Recurrent and Capital Programs, the largest of the Commission's activities reflect the latter category. There is no provision for general aid given in this way in the United States.

2. The stimulation of particular activities through differential funding - This approach involves using earmarked grants to provide financial incentives for specific activities, to fund demonstration projects, or to purchase particular services. All of the American ESEA fits into this category. The Australian Schools Commission's programs such as the Special Projects (Innovations) Program, the Disadvantaged Schools Program, the Services and Development Program and the Special Education Program also reflect this approach. In America these are usually called categorical programs and in Australia specific purpose programs.

3. Regulation - This involves legally specifying behavior, imposing standards, certifying, and licensing and enforcing accountability procedures. Programs in both countries involve some of this but in general there is far more regulation attempted from Washington than from Canberra. The monitoring and accountability requirements of most of the ESEA compared with those of the bulk of the Schools Commission's programs are instructive in this matter.

4. The discovery and dissemination of knowledge - This refers to having research performed and making data available. Many agencies in both countries are involved in these activities, the two which are most exclusively concerned being the National Institute of Education in the United States and the Education Research and Development Committee in Australia. Other significant bodies in America include the USOE (United States Office of Education) and the NSF (National Science Foundation.) In Australia both the Schools Commission and the Curriculum Development Centre also play this role.

5. The provision of services - This refers to the provision of technical assistance, materials and consultants in specialized subjects. Once again a wide variety of bodies in both countries do some of this, particularly the USOE and NSF in America and the Commonwealth Department of Education and the Curriculum Development Centre in Australia.

6. The exertion of moral suasion - This is defined as developing vision and questioning educational assumptions through speeches and publications. In Australia both the Schools Commission and the CDC have been active in this way, and in America the USOE, the NIE and the NSF are also obvious examples.

Depending upon which mode a federal government employs different kinds of political issues may be encountered. It is likely that the political sensitivity of the first three modes, i.e. general aid, differential aid and regulation, will be greater than that of the last three, i.e. the discovery of knowledge, the provision of services and the exertion of moral suasion. This is partially because these former methods involve greater attempts to influence behavior not only at the school level but at the state level as well, frequently a touchy area in federal systems. As the vast bulk of federal aid in both countries falls into the first two categories then one might expect to find some significant political problems. This is, in fact, the case and I will turn now to a discussion of some of these political issues.

Factors that may Affect Implementation at the Federal and State Levels

There are a wide variety of political issues which may emerge during the implementation of federal programs aimed at educational change. Factors which may have a significant effect and which seem to be particularly relevant in a comparison of the Australian and American experiences in this area include the following:

1. The "traditional" philosophy regarding the value of education and the present extent of cultural consensus about that philosophy - In particular, to what extent has the basic cultural value system supported the extension of formal schooling and innovation in education? To what degree is there cultural consensus or conflict within the society with regard to the perceived value of education?

2. The type of political system - In this case what are the elements in the Westminster system when compared with the presidential system which are relevant in considering the implementation of federal programs?

3. The type of political structure - Federalism is a complex political structure and both Australia and the United States have federal structures. What are the effects of federalism upon the national government's efforts to implement national programs?

4. The organization of education - In the comparison of Australia and America there are two elements in the organization of education that appear significant. One is the degree of centralization *vs* decentralization of the education systems of the two countries and the ways in which this feature influences the implementation of federal programs. The second element is the role of the private education sector, the issue of church/state relationships with regard to education and the extent to which there is public financial support of private schooling.

5. The "legitimation" of educational reform - Hans Weiler (1979) has argued elsewhere that "the most critical issues in the politics of educational reform stem from the question of legitimacy." (p.45) Legitimation refers to the basis on which "states exercise power and have that exercise accepted by their subjects." (p.44) Weiler has also elaborated on the different notions of legitimation that are relevant : legitimation by procedure; legitimation by expertise; legitimation by symbols; and legitimation by participation. In this comparative study how have the respective governments attempted to legitimate their programs for educational reform, what are the similarities and dissimilarities and why? In what ways is legitimation related to implementation?

6. Types of federal involvement - This refers to the kinds of programs that the governments have attempted to implement. What are the objectives of the programs and what are the strategies that have been used in implementation? One issue that immediately emerges here is the question of general aid *vs* specific purpose or categorical aid.

7. The nature of the power relationships - Educational reform programs inevitably involve the redistribution of power. Dalin (1978) has poised part of the question as "Who benefits? Who decides? Who has to change?" (p.19). He also points out that these three groups are often not the same and this can create conflict. In the Australian and American cases, what are the nature of the relevant power relationships and how have they affected the implementation of federal programs?

8. Evaluation and Accountability - What kind of evaluation and accountability requirements have been adopted in the two countries, what has been their purpose, and who has been their audience? What has been the effect of evaluation upon the implementation of the programs themselves?

I can not pursue all of these potentially relevant factors in this short paper. Therefore what I would like to do is highlight four of the issues that seem to have been particularly problematic in the last couple of decades in the two countries. These include (1) the type of political structure - in this case federalism and part of its effect on the implementation of national programs; (2) the type of federal involvement - especially the issue of specific purpose or categorical programs *versus* general aid, and also (3) the implementation strategy referred to by Ernest House (1974) as the "doctrine of transferability; and finally (4) the organization of education - in particular the seemingly perennial issues of church/state and public/private schooling.

The Type of Political Structure : Federalism, Federal/State Relations and Educational Change

While those of us who are used to living in federal systems of government take federalism for granted, it is still useful to emphasize what an enormously complex political system it actually is, particularly when one considers the problems of national governments in implementing educational change. While one tends to picture federalism as a nice and tidy layer cake with powers and responsibilities neatly ordered the reality is much more of a marble cake as Grodzin once noted with layers swirled into each other seemingly at random and everywhere unpredictable. Furthermore, while both the United States and Australia have superficially

similar federal structures, in fact, there are some very significant differences. In general these differences can be summarized by noting that there is a much higher potential for federal/state conflict in Australia than in the United States and that this has affected the implementation of federal programs in both countries.

The reasons for this higher potential for conflict in Australia are numerous and to some degree they are simply related to the degree to which centralization centralizes conflict as well as policy making. In Australia there are only seven real centers of power (the six state capitals plus the national capital) while in America there are dozens. However, more fundamentally, the more difficult federal/state relations can be attributed to three factors. Firstly, the combination of the Westminster system of government within a federal structure combines forms of government which are directly opposed to each other in a number of important ways. The Westminster system centers accountability in the cabinet around the twin concepts of ministerial responsibility and administrative responsibility through the permanent head of a department. But a federal structure is devised to dissipate responsibility amongst several layers of government precisely because it reflects ideological opposition to centralization of power. The combination of these two forms of government - a situation which does not prevail in the United States - encourages conflict among seven governments structured as though each and each alone is responsible and accountable. (Holmes & Sharman, 1977).

Related to this is the strong party system in the Australian Westminster tradition. The cohesiveness of the legislative parties ensures strong party conflict which is often accentuated when the national and the state governments are of different parties. The United States has a weak party

system and hence this kind of federal/state party-based conflict occurs somewhat less often.

Another reason why federal/state relations are often more contentious in Australia relates to the fact that Australia is a functionally federal but fiscally unitary system. In this situation the states have a major responsibility for a variety of functions and services including education but the federal government has the power and ability to collect the substantial proportion of available tax funds. This situation is bound to create problems with the states feeling that their alternatives for action are limited by the funds that the national government will or will not provide. The United States is both functionally and fiscally federal to a much larger extent and consequently when the national government wishes to introduce educational change programs, it is more clearly spending its own money and the states can continue to raise and spend theirs.

Type of Federal Involvement: Specific Purpose or Categorical Grants vs General Aid

Another political issue likely to emerge in the implementation of federal programs supporting educational change is that of specific purpose or categorical grants *versus* general aid. This is an extremely complex field and there are enormous financial implications in the issue, particularly when one introduces the role of revenue sharing in both countries, but I would simply like to mention a few political concerns. Specific purpose grants are often criticised in America as resulting in uncoordinated educational funding and also as having so many strings attached as to make an industry of compliance. While there has indeed been criticism in Australia by state governments of federal "strings" tied to education grants, in reality both of these judgements are much more apropos of the American

scene. All of the American efforts are specific purpose programs and a patchwork of largely uncoordinated programs has clearly grown up over the years. These programs also have a well-deserved reputation for paperwork at every level primarily because the American federal government is particularly concerned with compliance. The Australian Schools Commission recommends the distribution of most of its funds in two basic categories, those of recurrent expenditures and capital expenditures. In other words, the bulk of its funds are provided as "general aid." Compared with the American programs the required paperwork on these programs as well as the smaller categorical programs is extraordinarily minimal. Furthermore, as there is no comparable body to the Schools Commission (which is specifically concerned with an overview of education funding) within United States, there is obviously more coordination of such federal programs in Australia than on the other side of the Pacific.

On the American scene it has been politically difficult to pass any general educational aid and the existence of categorical programs reflects a political system (the presidential system) where most legislation is composed of compromises. Given the political structure in Australia (the parliamentary Westminster system) it is and was possible for a newly elected party to pass its educational program package nearly intact in 1973 with only a number of small if significant changes.

While the American government must, to some extent live with compromise categorical grants, the Australian government would be likely to find it easier to shift entirely to some form of total general aid if it wished. However, this could raise problems of federal government accountability. At the moment, for example, the Australian Schools Commission would find it much easier to demonstrate its accountability with its small but very significant specific purpose programs than its general aid programs where

the money is more or less turned over to the states at least in relation to government schools. Further, many proponents of federal aid to education might worry than money not tied specifically to some kind of a program could be reduced more easily than earmarked funds as simply part of a general budget cutting exercise. Various educational pressure groups who have fought long and hard for specific funds for "their" problem, such as Special Education, might also be less than convinced that they could easily obtain such funds from hard pressed state departments particularly given Australia's unitary taxation system. It is also the case that while state governments might not like their priorities preempted with regard to education spending, State Education Departments do not have to bargain with other state departments for their share of tied grants. Finally, there is still the argument that there <u>are</u> national concerns in relation to education that make some guidelines in federal spending desirable.

However, it should be stressed that arguments <u>for</u> specific purpose grants can be taken too far and probably have in America. The states <u>are</u> closer to the schools in many if not all ways and special local problems are not always evident to federal bureaucrats. Australia, in particular, has a long standing habit of thinking of itself in terms of two eastern cities and regarding the rest of the continent as a somewhat exotic backdrop. I would argue that heavy-handed federal government control of aid to education is inappropriate in the 1980s for many reasons some of which I will explore in a later section.

<u>*The Organization of Education : Church/State and Public/Private Schooling Issues Towards the End of the Twentieth Century*</u>

A third area of political concern faced by federal governments in implementing programs aimed at educational change in both countries is the late

twentieth century version of church/state and public/private issues with regard to education. Both constitutions specify the separation of church and state but such a principle has been interpreted differently in the two countries. The United States has, by and large, stayed out of the business of the large scale funding of private schools, church or otherwise. Recent Supreme Court interpretations suggest that this traditional view is becoming even stronger. In Australia, on the other hand, with the advent of the Schools Commission the federal government has gotten very much involved and provides substantial aid, both of the general and categorical types. While public opinion is by no means uniform about this and there is a long standing case in front of the Australian High Court on the constitutionality of the issue, the chances are still good that federal aid to non-government schools will remain a reality, if a contentious one.

It is interesting that very similar principles were advanced in both countries to "settle" this question at the beginnings of the growth in federal aid. In America the formula for success was the "child benefit theory" which emphasized that federal aid was intended to benefit children whatever kind of school, public or private that they attended. In Australia it was the "needs principle" which proposed that the needs of children for adequate schooling should be met whatever kind of school, public or private that they attended.

However the implementation of these principles has been considerably different in practice. In America the principle was used to provide categorical aid, the majority of which goes only indirectly to church related schools. Some resources like buses, books and other educational equipment are provided or made accessible for private school children and under the "shared services" concept the facilities of public schools can

be used for private school students. The Australian government, however, has gone far beyond this "additional resources idea" and begun funding not only specific purpose programs but capital works and recurrent expenses for the non-government sector (as well as the government sector.) The difference between the "needs principle" and the "child benefit theory" in practice is that the Australian government clearly funds schools while the American government more apparently funds children.

Both countries are currently facing problems in these areas. In Australia, primarily because State Education Departments have (unexpectedly) increased their spending on education, the original (1974) resource standards targets of the Schools Commission for government schools have been nearly met while, partially because of decreasing financial support in the private school sector, the "needs" of non-government schools have been increasing. Given the federal government's recent restrictions on the Schools Commission's budget, the "needs principle" is emerging as the primary vehicle for funding non-government schools, an ironic twist certainly not intended by the Labor Party which introduced the original idea. It is likely that this situation will continue to create political problems in secular Australia, particularly given the facts that the church/state issue has historically been The Education Issue in this country and the Catholic population has always been very substantial.

In the United States on the other hand, the situation is also complex and also suggests that the issue is far from settled. To begin with the traditional local property tax base for educational finance is being threatened by state Supreme Court decisions declaring it to be unconstitutional on equity grounds. We are also seeing voter tax rebellions which, through referendum, are limiting the amount of local property taxes

which can be raised for schools (as well as other local government services). These activities increase the powers of the state governments which find themselves attempting to develop more equitable funding arrangements for education. Hence the current re-emergence of the once dying voucher idea. Vouchers fund parents not public schools and the old issue of church and state is alive once more.

Furthermore, even without voucher schemes as American state governments attempt to level education spending across local school districts American parents who have traditionally avoided private schools precisely because they could "buy" a good education by moving into the "right" suburbs may feel that if they do not have a "public choice then they will want a private escape" (Clinchy & Cody, 1978). One of the reasons for the smaller degree of pressure for government aid to private schools in America has been that less than ten percent of the students attend such schools while the figure in Australia is closer to twenty-five percent. It would appear that the "old" political problem of "state aid" has not been settled after all and will continue to haunt governments at all levels when they attempt to implement programs aimed at educational change.

Tye Type of Federal Involvement: The Doctrine of Transferability

I would also like to refer briefly to one final political issue associated with the implementation of innovative federal educations programs and that is what Ernest House (1974) has called the problems of the "doctrine of transferability." House defined this problem as the search for the magic solution in government policy on educational innovation, characteristic of an industrialized technocratic society which believes that "everything can be fixed." The assumption is made that the solution or innovation

must be widely accepted and have highly generalizable results in different situations. Referring to the American experience, House points out that this is typical of what we now call the Research, Development and Diffusion model of educational change which is rightly discredited as a panacea for all educational ills. It is discredited for many reasons but most basically for being overly rational, for regarding the "consumer" as passive, and for empirically not effecting much change anyway. The alternative to the doctrine of transferability is to aid in the development of the local capacity for change. This involves avoiding heavy-handed top-down federal or state initiatives. It suggests programs which, while earmarked for innovation, do not closely specify and monitor the kinds of innovations attempted. It also suggests that the people who are the consumers must be involved in the control of the process of implementation.

At this point I would like to make the generalization that while these kinds of issues have most certainly been problems for the American government in sponsoring educational innovations they have been somewhat less problematic on the Australian scene primarily because the Australian government has promoted school based activities of all kinds in its special purpose programs. They have been much less prone to concern about "transferability" perhaps partially because they have had the American example a few years ahead of them. Nevertheless, there are political and bureaucratic pressures to find and apply the "one best solution" particularly as education budgets in Australia recede. There has been a constant strain in several of the School's Commissions programs with many internal and external advocates arguing in favor of "magic solution policy" on cost-benefit grounds. Yet a major part of the reason for avoiding the R & D model rests with what we are discovering happens at the school level when attempts are made to implement educational innovations. Thus I would like to turn now to my second perspective on educational innovations, the organizational perspective.

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FEDERALLY SUPPORTED EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS

It is commonplace now for educational theorists to identify characteristics of schools as formal organizations and the ways in which they differ from other kinds of organizations. Many of these differences have important implications for the implementation of educational innovations. They include such factors as:

1. The unstable, multiple and contested goals of educational organizations.
2. The inadequate and unclear technology of teaching.
3. The complex, and unstable environment of schools and the accessibility of schools to outside pressures.
4. The monopoly nature of compulsory schooling and the consequent lack of incentives to compete.

A serious consideration of these kinds of factors suggests what can happen when an "pure" innovation finds itself in this kind of "dirty" environment. It is in the nature of schools as organization that innovations are "transformed." Consequently, many writers have pointed out that to understand the process of innovation in educational organizations one needs to concentrate on what happens during the implementation stage of the change proces at the school level. In some ways this is a similar observation to that which was made earlier about the divorce of policy from implementation at the federal level, but the focus now is turned to the divorce of adoption from implementation at the school level. Political issues in the federal sphere will strongly affect what educational reform is attempted but organizational issues at the school level will affect what actually happens where the children and the teachers are: in the classrooms.

Factors Related to Implementation at the School Level

One way to compare organizational issues which may emerge during the implementation of education innovations in schools in both Australia and the United States is to examine similar research that has been done in this area in the two countries. One of the best known American studies done on implementation in recent years is the massive study of federal programs supporting educational change conducted by the Rand Corporation in California between 1974 and 1978 and popularly called the Rand Change Agent Studies. This research encompasses eight volumes, investigated both implementation and continuation, and utilized a national survey sample of 293 projects and 29 case studies (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978).

A similar study of the implementation of an Australian federal government program supporting educational change was conducted by myself in Australia between 1976-1978. This study was on a much smaller scale than the Rand Study but it utilized a very similar theoretical framework and investigated many identical issues. The study involved a survey of 95 innovation projects and case studies of 12 projects all funded by the Schools Commission in Western Australia. The comparative findings of these two studies are of particular interest as they point to very similar factors operating at the school level in the implementation of educational innovations in both countries. In this short paper a detailed account of both studies cannot be provided. Hence it is my intention to simply highlight some of the major areas of interest for those concerned with comparative educational reform efforts. (A more detailed report on the Australian study is currently in progress.)

The Australian study was considered an exploratory study and four categories of possible factors affecting implementation were identified from the literature. These are very similar to the categories used in the Rand Studies and they include:

1. Characteristics of the innovation.
2. Characteristics of the implementation strategies employed.
3. Characteristics of the organizational settings.
4. Characteristics of the personnel involved.

Some of the comparative results will be discussed below under the four relevant categories.

Characteristics of the Innovation

In general both the Australian and American studies found that the characteristics of the innovations in terms of their educational methods, subject area dealt with, or project "values" were not highly related to implementation. Rand looked at educational methods and found only a small relationship to implementation effects. Porter looked at subject areas and found only one area, language programs, related to implementation. Porter also looked at the project "values" as expressed in terms of the Schools Commission's priorities (such as projects that promote cultural pluralism, etc.) and found that there were only a few value areas related to implementation, these being projects intending to open up the school to the community, projects promoting better Aboriginal education, and projects trying to cope with the isolation of students who live in remote areas. With these possible exceptions regarding project values, it is likely that the actual kind of project in terms of subject areas and methods is less important to its implementation than how it is implemented.

With regard to the level of resources, the Rand study found no relationship between the level of funding and implementation while Porter did find a positive relationship meaning that the more expensive projects reported better and easier implementation. However, this is one area where the cross-cultural comparison is difficult as most of the projects funded under the Innovations Program in Australia are considerably smaller in terms of financial resources than many of those funded under the various American federal programs that Rand examined.

Characteristics of the Implementation Strategies

Both studies found that factors associated with the ways in which a project was implemented at the school level were very important to the ease and success of the implementation. Porter found that the following factors hindered implementation effectiveness: not being the original applicant for the innovation grant (a situation that usually occurs through high rates of teacher mobility in Australia); not having the decision making power with regard to the project; implementing a project where the objectives were difficult for others in the school to understand; or where there was a complex implementation strategy that was difficult for others in the school to understand, and implementing a project which increased the workload of those involved. Porter also found the following factors facilitated implementation effectiveness: prior observation of an innovation; prior trial of an innovation; involvement in the implementation process; implementing a project where the results were easy to observe; implementing a project with student involvement.

In addition to similar findings by Rand, they further identified a number of specific implementation strategies which were effective in implementation and which generally included on-site well-conducted teacher training

that was directly relevant to the project, and teacher participation in project decisions. Rand also coined the phrase "mutual adaptation" to describe the process by which the project is adapted to the reality of its institutional setting through implementation strategies which allow teachers time to get feedback, correct errors and build commitment.

Characteristics of the Organizational Settings

When looking at the formal structure of schools, Porter found that compatibility with the organizational structure was positively related to implementation, as was one element of a bureaucratic structure, the existence of rules. However, other indications of bureaucracy such as a hierarchy of authority and impersonality were not related to implementation. Looking at the informal structure of schools, Porter found that cooperation from the school administration, cooperation from the staff not directly involved in the project, cooperation from the students and cooperation from the system authority were all related positively to implementation as was a previous school history of innovation. Job satisfaction and perceived "rewards" received for undertaking the innovative projects were negatively related to implementation, which may suggest that innovators are not the most content teachers in the schools. In a similar vein Rand also found that the quality of the working relationships in the schools, the active support of principals in particular, and the perceived effectiveness of project directors were important factors under the general category of organizational climate.

In addition both Rand and Porter found that secondary schools seemed to have more implementation problems than primary schools. Further, Porter's study found that smaller schools had more implementation problems than

larger schools. Porter also found compatibility with the physical structure of the host school to be positively related to implementation.

In considering the relationship of the school to its environment Porter found that there were implementation problems when the objectives of the project were difficult for the community to understand or when the implementation process itself was perceived as complex by the community. Cooperation from the federal funding agent, the Schools Commission, was positively related to implementation.

Characteristics of School Personnel

Not boding well for the possibilities of a stable teacher population in the future, Porter found "age" and Rand found "years of experience" to be negatively related to implementation effectiveness. Porter also found the degree of initial enthusiasm and commitment to the project, as well as the initial understanding of both the innovative idea and the implementation process, to be negatively related to implementation effectiveness which suggests that over-confidence and grandiose expectations by school level innovators may be problematic. However, Porter also found that the perceived ability to change in the directions required by the innovation was highly related to successful implementation. Along the same lines Rand found that the greater the scope of change required of the teacher by the project, the higher the implementation effectiveness. Rand also found that a teacher's sense of efficacy in relation to students was related to successful implementation.

The Practitioner/Policy-Maker Discrepancy

One other general observation needs to be made regarding the implementation of federally supported innovations at the school level. This relates to the existence of what Hall (1979) has called the "practitioner/policy-maker discrepancy. This refers to the apparent "reality gap" between remote policy makers and the practitioners in the field who are actually involved in the implementation process.

In the Australian study under discussion such a reality gap was evident (particularly in the case studies) even though the innovations concerned were supported by a federal program that tried to anticipate this problem. In large part the discrepancy was obvious simply because a new educational idea being implemented in a school just does not look much like the outsider's conception of it. This is not because teachers and other practitioners are shifty people who resist change, or who persist in not implementing innovations the way some outside originator intended. The comment is equally true when the practitioner thought up the idea him or herself (as was the case in the Australian sample) albeit according to government or bureaucratic guidelines.

Partially this discrepancy exists because, as many researchers are now chanting virtually in unison, change is a process not an event. It involves individual developmental shifts in both attitudes and behavior and it has a time span of its own. This process may not fit neatly into an election period, a Treasury Department's requirements for the spending of governmental funds, or the career aspirations of either the external bureaucrat or the local teacher. It would seem that the broad models for reform developed

by distant politicians and bureaucrats, however elegantly, just do not make much sense in the everyday world of the school.

The American Rand Change-Agent Study also brought this point home in another way by actually comparing the federal implementation strategies used in several of the American programs. In general they found that the differences in federal strategies were not as important as the local situation to successful implementation and continuation. Hence they concluded that "The difference between success and failure depended primarily on how school districts implemented their projects, not on the type of federal sponsorship. The guidelines and management strategies of the federal change agent projects were simply overshadowed by local concerns and characteristics." (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p.vi)

CONCLUSIONS

So where does this leave us? Are we to conclude that federal policy-makers should toss efforts at educational reform in the "too-hard basket" and concentrate their energy and their money elsewhere? Not only is this most unlikely given a new generation of demands for educational reform (accountability, "standards", literacy and numeracy, etc.), but it would negate what we have learned about educational change. In any event many of the problems described in this paper are to be found in other federal efforts at change and not just in education.

The advantage of conceptualizing policy on educational change as has been suggested in the preceeding pages is that it enables us to move from the political sphere at the federal level down through the organizational sphere at the school level. One of the major gaps in the understanding of

the change process has been the failure to follow policy through from its beginnings and their context to its actual implementation (or "non-implementation") and its context. The addition of the comparative element further enables us to examine how variations affect the process.

To summarize the approach explored here, I have suggested that political factors at the federal level and organizational factors at the school level are particularly critical in the analysis of national government efforts to support educational change in federal political systems. Potentially relevant political factors include: the traditional philosophy regarding the value of education and the present extent of cultural consensus about that philosophy; the type of political system; the type of political structure; the organization of education; the legitimation of educational reform; the types of federal involvement; the nature of the relevant power relationships, and the nature of the evaluation and accountability requirements. In this paper I have explored only a few of these using Australia and America as the basis for comparison. Potentially relevant organizational factors include: the characteristics of the innovation; the characteristics of the implementation strategies; the characteristics of the organizational settings; the characteristics of school personnel; and the existence of a "practitioner/policy-maker discrepancy". In this paper I have briefly compared some American and Australian research that explores these factors.

The most obvious implication of this comparative exercise is that the understanding of the relevant political factors that may affect implementation of federal reform efforts in education are crucial to policy-makers concerned with actually <u>reaching schools</u> with their programs. But it is likely to be the organizational factors at the school level which are most significant to the actual <u>implementation</u> where it counts: <u>within the schools</u>.

The discussion of some of the differences between Australia and the United States with regard to certain political factors makes this point clearer. Despite differences in political features which have indeed affected what kinds of federal education programs reach the schools in each country, it is still the case that very similar factors are significant to the implementation process within the schools in both nations.

This obviously suggests that federal policy-makers must be cognizant not only of the political issues that may affect the implementation of their education programs within the federal structure but also of the organizational issues that may affect the actual implementation by the practitioners with children in schools. Without attention directed to this sphere as well it is unlikely that action at the national level with regard to education will ever have much effect. Educational change is clearly a complex process but it is not a totally unintelligible one. Much more exploration needs to be done in both the political and organizational spheres but some of the puzzle is becoming increasingly clear.

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